**OBJECTIVE**

**Students will:**

* Get an introduction to nonfiction texts and identify what they already know about this genre
* Prepare to read a nonfiction article by building background knowledge and learning key vocabulary
* Learn text features associated with types of nonfiction
* Learn about different text structures used in nonfiction and identify the text structure of a specific passage
* Check their comprehension skills and apply what they've learned to their own writing

**LESSONS FOR THIS UNIT**

* Lesson 1: What's Special About Nonfiction?
* Lesson 2: Prepare to Read Nonfiction
* Lesson 3: Teach Text Features & Read Nonfiction
* Lesson 4: Teach Text Structure for Nonfiction
* Lesson 5: Check Comprehension & Apply Writing

**REPRODUCIBLES**

* KWL Chart
* Stopping a Toppling Tower
* Prereading Organizer
* Five Text Structures

**DAY 1: What's Special About Nonfiction?**

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This lesson will provide students with a strong foundation for reading, writing, and using nonfiction.

**OBJECTIVE**

Students will:

* See that, while nonfiction may be different from a fairy tale, storybook, or novel, it can be fun to read
* Understand that nonfiction will play a role not only in this year's curriculum, but in daily life for years to come
* Identify some of the basic characteristics of nonfiction literature

**MATERIALS**

* Classroom social studies or science textbook
* Example of fiction (e.g., storybook)
* Samples of nonfiction literature (books, menus, maps, magazines, etc.)

**DIRECTIONS**

**Step 1:** Discuss what nonfiction is with students:

* Point out examples that are all around them: books about their favorite animals, lunch menus, maps, classroom magazines, etc.
* Define nonfiction: It gives information. It explains, informs, or persuades.

**Step 2:** Use the chart below to guide a discussion of the characteristics of nonfiction and how reading nonfiction is different than reading stories or novels. Use examples from a social studies or science textbook to illustrate some of these characteristics.

**Characteristics of Nonfiction Text**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | How does nonfiction text looks different from fiction? | * There may be chapter titles and section headers that preview information. * Each page has words in a variety of fonts and type sizes. * **Bold** or *italic* fonts may be used to signal important words or phrases. * Diacritical marks may be used to guide pronunciation. | | How are graphic aids used? | * Maps, charts, diagrams, photographs are usually included to illustrate or summarize information. * Captions or labels must be examined carefully for relevant information. | | How is the vocabulary different? | * There may be more words that are unfamiliar. Look for multi-syllabic words like "photosynthesis" that may be difficult to pronounce. | | What do we know about nonfiction? | * There is a great deal of information to be understood and remembered. | |

**Step 3:** Reassure students that these unusual features should not discourage them. Explain how these characteristics are “clues” that will help them understand what they're reading.

**Step 4:** Have students share experiences they've had with nonfiction. Try these prompts:

* What books about real people, places, and events have you read?
* Do you enjoy reading these types of books? Why or why not?
* When you look at an article or a biography, do you look at the illustrations and read the captions?
* What Web sites do you visit?
* Have you ever had to read directions for a board game or ingredients in a cookbook?

**DAY 2: Prepare to Read Nonfiction**

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This lesson will provide students with a strong foundation for reading, writing, and using nonfiction.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Students will:**

1. Get an introduction to using KWL Charts as tools for reading nonfiction
2. Become familiar with unfamiliar words
3. Share what they already know about the topic of the nonfiction selection and use this knowledge to help prepare to read

**MATERIALS**

1. Chart Paper
2. KWL Chart
3. Markers
4. Stopping a Toppling Tower

**REPRODUCIBLES**

1. KWL Chart
2. Stopping a Toppling Tower

**DIRECTIONS**

**PART 1**

**Step 1:** Tell students that they will be reading about the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Give them time to think about whether they've heard of it and what they know about it.

**Step 2:** While students are thinking, distribute the KWL Chart.

**Step 3:** Ask students to tell you what they already know about the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Ask question to guide the discussion so that students share what they know about where the tower is located, why it's famous, and what the problems are with the tower. As you discuss the facts, have students write them down in the “What do I **K** now?” column of the chart.

**Step 4:** Identify any misconceptions or gaps in students' knowledge. Provide any additional background on the tower that they will need to comprehend “Stopping a Toppling Tower.” Have students add this information to the “What Do I **K** now?” column.

**Step 5:** Ask students whether discussing the tower has raised questions. Is there anything that they don't know about the tower that they'd like to find out? Have them list these questions in the “What do I **W** ant to Find Out?” column. Student should put the chart to the side. They will complete the “What Did I **L** earn?” column after they've read the selection.

**PART 2**

**Step 1:** Preteach key vocabulary from “Stopping a Toppling Tower.” First, select about four words from the text that students may need to review.

**Example:** tilt, engineers, landmark

**Step 2:** Write each word on the chart paper. Have students rate for themselves whether they know what it means, have heard it before but aren't sure they know what it means, or have never seen or heard it. Ask students to share what they know about each word.

**Step 3:** Pronounce each word, define it, and give an example sentence.

**Example:** Tilt means to lean to one side. If I *tilt* my chair back, it may fall.

**Step 4:** Point out synonyms or antonyms and unusual meanings.

**Example:** Explain that “straight” is an antonym of “tilted,” and that the word “engineers” can refer to people with very different types of jobs; describe the meaning that will be used in Stopping a Toppling Tower.

**DAY 3: Teach Text Features & Read Nonfiction**

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This lesson will provide students with a strong foundation for reading, writing, and using nonfiction.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Students will:**

1. Learn the tools of reading nonfiction (i.e., text features)
2. Use think-aloud strategies to prepare to read the selection
3. Identify graphic aids and understand their importance

**MATERIALS**

1. Overhead transparency of Stopping a Toppling Tower (optional)
2. Student copies of Prereading Organizer — 1 for each student
3. Sample book with fiction stories (optional)
4. Student copies of Stopping a Toppling Tower — 1 for each student

**REPRODUCIBLES**

1. Prereading Organizer
2. Stopping a Toppling Tower

**DIRECTIONS**

**Step 1:** Distribute the papers and make an overhead transparency for Stopping a Toppling Tower if possible to refer to as you discuss the selection.

**Step 2:** Lead students through the “Read About,” having them look over the article and notice the special text features: title, headings, photos, etc. Have students comment on the differences they see on the article page compared to a page in a favorite story. You might open a book of fiction for them to review.

**Step 3:** Walk students through the reading tools. As they read about each item, have them identify corresponding features from the selection. Point out that photographs, diagrams, and charts are examples of graphic aids that illustrate information and help readers visualize what is in the text. For example, the photograph helps readers visualize the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Graphic aids sometimes offer additional information that is important.

**Step 4:** Model think-aloud strategies for pre-reading by asking questions and making observations about the text features.

**Example:** The title tells me I'm going to read about a tower that might fall. Certain words are boldfaced — these are important, so I'll try to remember them. There is a photograph and a diagram — I can use these to get a clear picture in my mind of what I'm reading.

**Step 5:** Have students use the Prereading Organizer to make predictions about the reading. Discuss some of the predictions that students make; be sure to ask them how or why they formed their ideas.

**Step 6:** Students should read "Stopping a Toppling Tower" quietly to themselves. Remind them to pay attention to the text features.

**DAY 4: Teach Text Structure for Nonfiction**

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This lesson plan will provide students with a strong foundation for reading, writing, and using nonfiction.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Students will:**

1. Gain an awareness and general understanding what text structures are
2. Learn what clues they can use to identify the text structure of a piece of writing

**MATERIALS**

1. Five Text Structures
2. Student copies of Stopping a Toppling Tower — 1 for each student

**REPRODUCIBLES**

1. Five Text Structures
2. Stopping a Toppling Tower

**DIRECTIONS**

**Step 1:** Use the Five Text Structures chart to explain **what text structures are** and **what clues students can use** to identify text structures.

**Step 2:** Help students understand the importance of understanding text structure by explaining that a reader who is aware of the patterns that are being used can anticipate the kind of information that will be presented.

**Example:** If we know a selection follows a “compare and contrast” organization, we can expect to read about likeness and differences between people or things. This will help us connect ideas and remember them.

**Step 3:** Have students reread Stopping a Toppling Tower.

**Step 4:** Ask students to identify what type text structure this selection is (problem *and solution*). Ask them, “How does the reader know?” They should be able to identify that the first paragraph states that there is a “problem.” The second paragraph states that engineers have found a “solution.” What headings offered clues?

**DAY 5: Check Comprehension & Apply Writing**

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This lesson will provide students with a strong foundation for reading, writing, and using nonfiction.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Students will:**

1. Check their comprehension skills
2. Apply what they've learned to their own writing

**MATERIALS**

1. Writing tools
2. Paper for students

**DIRECTIONS**

**Step 1:** Wrap up the lesson by using the following discussion questions to check comprehension:

1. Why is the Leaning Tower of Pisa so famous?
2. What was the problem with the tower?
3. How did the engineers solve the problem?
4. Which text features did you find most helpful?
5. What clues in the article helped you figure out the text structure?

**Step 2:** Have students write two or three sentences that tell you about the article. Ask them to include the following:

* What happened to make the Learning Tower of Pisa dangerous
* What was done to make the tower safe again

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